

# Phoenix Police Department counts on ISO 9001:2000 – 24/7!



In July 2003, the Records and Identification Bureau of the Phoenix Police Department, Arizona, became the first law enforcement unit in the United States to certify its quality management system to **ISO 9001:2000**. This case study describes the pioneering implementation of the standard in an “industry” where life-altering decisions are made **24/7** – 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



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**M**embers of the law enforcement profession rely heavily on a variety of records and support activities in their efforts to provide safety and security for the communities they serve. These records and support activities – whose variety and scale is shown by the photos illustrating this article – provide officers, detectives, and crime analysts with vital information related to past, present and possible future criminal activity. Recognizing the importance of quality information, the Records and Identification Bureau of the Phoenix Police Department (PPD),

Phoenix, Arizona, became the first law enforcement unit in the United States to implement a quality management system (QMS) certified to ISO 9001:2000.

Why would a major city police department look to business standards to improve its performance? In the summer of 2000, Judie Welch, then the administrator of the PPD’s Records and Identification (R&I) Bureau, introduced a new strategic plan entitled “Reorganizing for Continuous Improvement”. The theme of this plan centered on the Bureau’s emphasis of the following concepts:

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Police Chief Harold Hurtt: 'Only by analyzing and understanding our internal processes can we develop continual improvements.'

- shift from a production-based to a knowledge-based organization,
- focus on continual improvement, and
- development of an organizational culture characterized by quality.

While progress continued through 2001, the Bureau increased its concentration on quality and continual improvement. Through the 2001-2003 strategic plan, entitled "Reorganizing for Continuous Improvement, Volume II, Focus on Quality," the Bureau described its vision of developing a quality management system enabling Bureau work units to provide services and products that meet customer expectations and to improve the related processes continually. The challenge faced by the R&I Bureau was identifying a methodology to accomplish these goals.

Through substantial research, contact with the American Society for Quality (ASQ - [www.asq.org](http://www.asq.org)), and dialogue with quality experts, the Bureau determined that ISO 9001:2000 closely matched the important elements of its vision and decided to design the new Bureau QMS - also known as "the Bureau business system" - to comply. Moreover, the third-party evaluation of the Bureau's compliance to the standard would provide the requisite objectivity to substantiate its identity as a quality organization.

Much has been written regarding the benefits of achieving ISO 9001:2000 certification, including greater efficiency, competitive edge and increased revenue, as well as a strengthened position in the market-place. While customer satisfaction, enhanced efficiency

and prudent financial management are goals common to all industries, benefits specific to the public sector may not be immediately clear.

The capacity to establish and maintain the highest levels of quality in terms of timeliness, completeness and accuracy of information is regularly restricted by the limited availability of resources generally associated with public service. Moreover, public

service is frequently taken for granted and is often negatively perceived by customers and citizens alike.

Although the R&I Bureau has always provided excellent products and services to its customers, its

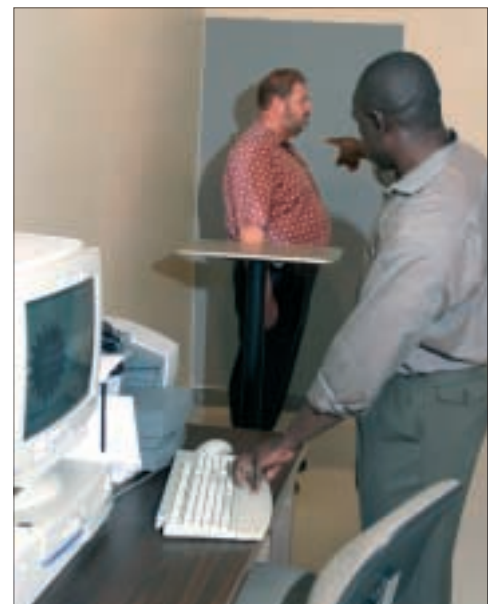
employees believe that pioneering an organized quality movement through ISO 9001:2000 certification in the police information management industry will have the significant benefit of enhancing the credibility and perceived performance levels of local law enforcement agencies.

This enhancement will lead to the corresponding benefit of elevating the quality of life of the community's citizens through improved public safety services and reduced likelihood of nonconforming products and services.

### Why would a major city police department look to business standards to improve its performance?



Code of ethics: 'The men and women of the Phoenix Police Department provide a unique service to the community that demands an unparalleled degree of public trust which must never be compromised.'



'Mugshot' photography.



## Consequences

The following examples illustrate the potentially devastating consequences for police and the communities they serve if the information products and services of a unit like the R&I Bureau are not up to standard.

### • Example 1

*A few years ago, a woman attended a conference in the downtown area of a large metropolitan city, leaving her vehicle in a parking garage. Returning to the garage after the conference, she found her vehicle was missing. She promptly reported the vehicle stolen and called her husband to pick her up.*

*After several minutes of discussion, the couple realized that the woman had in fact gone to the wrong parking garage to retrieve her vehicle. After retracing her movements that morning, the vehicle was discovered exactly where she had parked it. The couple contacted the police to advise them of the error and asked that the vehicle be removed from "the system" as a stolen vehicle.*

*Unfortunately, the stolen vehicle was not removed properly and within a few months the husband was pulled over at gunpoint by police and handcuffed in front of his 12-year-old son. The error was soon realized, the man was released, and he and his son returned home. Without adequate checks in place, this type of error could result in possible danger to an innocent citizen and civil liability for the city.*

### • Example 2

*In another example, suppose a vehicle were car-jacked by two armed suspects. The victim contacts the police as soon as possible, an officer enters a report, but the vehicle is not entered into the system properly. A few hours later, an officer stops the vehicle for a minor*



*traffic violation but receives a negative response after "running" the license plate on the mobile data terminal. Because the officer may be acting on incomplete information, his/her safety may be in jeopardy upon approaching the vehicle occupied by armed suspects.*

The above examples illustrate the importance of accurate, complete, and timely information. To that end,

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the leadership team of the R&I Bureau determined that the ISO 9000 family of standards provided the requisite guidance to elevate the quality of its services. This objective was achieved through the identification and documentation of standardized work

processes – an activity that promotes the identification and satisfaction of customer needs associated with accuracy, completeness, and timeliness.

Together with its partner, Business Enterprise Mapping, Inc.<sup>1)</sup>, the Bureau has succeeded in transforming its quality vision to a working reality. In a truly Bureau-wide effort, all employees, either directly or indirectly, participated in the development and enhancement of the Bureau's QMS and/or the development of their work process maps.

The Phoenix Police Department (PPD), Phoenix, Arizona, USA, comprises more than 3 400 men and women. The department utilizes car, helicopter, horse and bicycle patrols to protect its 1,2 million citizens over the 470 square miles of the city.



Training

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The legendary Phoenix bird that adorns the PPD badge was fabled to have lived 500 years before destroying itself by fire, only to rise from the ashes, youthful and strong, to begin a new life. It was adopted as the symbol of the new city in commemoration of the ancient Pueblo Grande civilization that had existed in Central Arizona in 700-1400 AD.



Fingerprinting

The new system also clearly adheres to the eight Quality Management Principles that lead to improved performance

The significant value of their efforts was ultimately substantiated in July 2003, when auditors from TUV America<sup>2)</sup> thoroughly examined the R&I Bureau's newly developed QMS and recommended certification to the ISO 9001:2000 standard. The project was challenging given the structure of the organization, the diverse activities performed, and the fact that many of the units operate on a 24/7 basis.

The 195-person Bureau is organized into eight interrelated work units that are dedicated to timely entry, maintenance, and dissemination of information for use by the criminal justice community and the general public: public/traffic records, forensic imaging, criminal history records and fingerprint identification, police automated computerized entry, centralized automated records support, business process planning and quality assurance, training and administrative support.

Through process mapping, the members of these Bureau work units have been able to identify and document the 33 processes that comprise its quality management system. The Bureau's staff, with considerable assistance from internal and external customers, utilized the graphics-based process mapping methodology of Business Enterprise Mapping to develop a QMS that ensures process effectiveness and efficiency.

The clear depiction of tasks, decisions, responsible parties, links to other processes, opportunities and information enable the Bureau to manage the system and demonstrate its responsiveness to the quality needs and expectations of its internal and external customers. Moreover, the new system also clearly adheres to the eight Quality Management Principles identified in the ISO 9001:2000 standard that lead to improved performance.

## Quality Management Principles

**Customer Focus:** To provide Bureau products and services to its customers at their expected level of quality, clear lines of communication are established and maintained to assist in determining customer need. Through in-person communication, fax, teletype, e-mail, inter-office mail, external mail services, customer surveys, transaction feedback, and both the Police Department and City of Phoenix Web sites, the Bureau, together with its customers, determines and provides products and services that satisfy customer expectations.

Customers include: police officers, criminal justice agencies, detectives, prosecuting attorneys, crime analysts, defence attorneys, crime laboratory personnel, personal injury attorneys, other city agencies, insurance companies, citizens, trucking companies and law enforcement agencies.

**Leadership:** The leadership team, together with Bureau staff members, has established and clearly promotes and communicates the purpose of the Bureau through its Quality Policy. Bureau purpose is defined as its dedication to meeting customer expectations through its focus on quality and an organizational philosophy characterized by continual improvement. This dedication is manifested through the Bureau's efforts to

communicate interactively with its customers to determine product and/or service requirements and to satisfy those requirements by:

- demonstrating a commitment to timeliness, completeness, and accuracy of information entered, maintained, and disseminated;
- advocating flexibility through its responsiveness to changing customer needs;
- developing an organizational culture characterized by its com-

The project was challenging...

many of the units operate on a 24/7 basis

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Vehicle recovery.

mitment to quality and continual improvement;

- promoting a knowledge-based environment through training and communication, and
- maintaining a high level of understanding of the interrelationship of the processes that form the Bureau business system.

**Involvement of People:** Throughout every step of the QMS development process, the Bureau leadership team recognized and engaged employee expertise to develop, document, and, in many cases, immediately improve the work processes associated with the Bureau's business system.

**Process Approach:** Each work process within the organization is documented in a detailed process map. The process map is the responsibility of the process owner designated on that map. Process owners coordinate the capturing and reflecting of best business practices in each map and the changing of maps when opportunities for improvement are identified. Process users are trained on the current version of maps that describe their work area and have agreed to follow the defined best practice, or to cause the process to be changed when they identify an improvement opportunity.

**System Approach to Management:** The R&I Bureau's QMS has elevated staff awareness that the various work processes employed throughout the Bureau have solid links to other processes inside and outside the Bureau's work environment. When improvements to processes are suggested, the process maps clearly identify those internal/external processes that may

be affected, and consultation among process owners and users is required before improvements are implemented.

**Continual Improvement:** As one of the critical elements of the R&I Bureau's Quality Policy, continual improvement is the responsibility of all members of the Bureau. This commitment requires leadership to encourage process users to critically evaluate work processes on a continual basis in an effort to identify improvement opportunities. Moreover, R&I Bureau customers are also encouraged to utilize established communication channels to initiate improvement actions.

**Factual Approach to Decision Making:** The Business Review Team (BRT), comprised of leadership members, meets regularly to review planning, objectives, and the suitability and effectiveness of the Bureau's QMS. The agenda will include the following topics:

- follow up of action items from the previous reviews;
- performance metrics – actual versus planned;
- critical improvement opportunities;
- changes that could affect the Bureau's QMS;
- determination of required resources, and
- detailed action list with responsibilities assigned

Business planning includes any planned activities that affect the quality of products and services delivered to R&I Bureau customers. The effectiveness of the business system is evaluated against specific criteria, including internal assessments, employee training, customer satisfaction, information supplier performance and the issuance and implementation of corrective and preventive action.



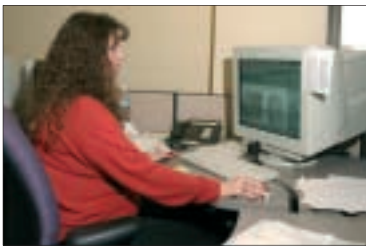
Shoulder patch of the PPD whose guiding values are summed up as P-R-I-D-E: **Protection and Prevention, Responsibility and Respect, Integrity and Ideals, Dedication to Duty, Employee Excellence.**

**The R&I Bureau has laid a solid foundation for excellence through its application of ISO 9001:2000**



Forensic imaging.





Fingerprint identification.

## An exciting opportunity awaits for quality management growth beyond the law enforcement boundaries of the City of Phoenix

**Mutually Beneficial Supplier Relationships:** The R&I Bureau and the suppliers of the information entered, maintained, and disseminated through Bureau processes are interdependent, and a clear understanding of the quality needs of each enhances the ability of both to add value to the products and services provided by the Phoenix Police Department.

### Challenges

The successful certification effort of the R&I Bureau was not free of challenges. This innovation in law enforcement management was met with funding constraints, primarily because it was not completely understood in the law enforcement industry and no police model existed that would have facilitated enhanced awareness. Through a reallocation of existing funds, the funding constraints were relieved.

Also challenging to the R&I leadership team was the communication of the benefits to all employees of the Bureau, an organization that operates on a 24/7 schedule. Conducting information-sharing meetings with employees at all hours of the day became commonplace.

An increased understanding at all levels of the Phoenix Police Department was achieved by:

- actively involving R&I Bureau employees;
- achieving certification;

Traffic accident.



- communicating positive system results, such as R&I employees quickly resolving 35 % of its original 440 employee-identified opportunities for improvement within the first six months, and
- actively sharing information with internal and external police employees.

The increased level of understanding at the executive level has led Police Chief Harold Hurtt and Assistant Chiefs Thomas Lannon and Michael Frazier to spearhead the initiative to enhance the investigative process using various elements of the ISO 9001:2000 standard as the guide. As Chief Hurtt indicates, "Only by analyzing and understanding our internal processes can we develop continual improvements to better prepare our employees for future challenges."

It is anticipated that a thorough understanding and continual improvement of the interrelated processes that comprise the investigative system will enable personnel from the crime laboratory, the property management bureau, and the many investigative units to work closely in their efforts to solve crimes and submit cases for prosecution.

### Vision

While the original goal of the R&I Bureau's management team has been met, the vision has been expanded. The R&I Bureau has laid a solid foundation for excellence through its application of ISO 9001:2000.

As the City of Phoenix Police Department continues to effectively and efficiently determine and meet the safety and security needs of its citizens through its understanding of quality principles, enhanced information management techniques, and improved investigative processes, an exciting opportunity awaits for quality management growth beyond the law enforcement boundaries of the City of Phoenix.